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AFTER ACTION REPORT

CC "R"

14TH ARMORED DIVISION

Dec 44, Feb 45 thru Apr 45

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HEADQUARTERS CC'R²
14TH ARMORED DIVISION, A. P. O. 446
U S ARMY

9 January 1945

HISTORY CC'R² 14TH ARMORED DIVISION, MONTH DEC 1944

On the 1st January, 1945, all records and documents of this Headquarters were destroyed by burning due to imminent capture in the vicinity of BARENTAL, FRANCE. Therefore, it becomes necessary to construct the following written history from memory and limited information from other sources. No supporting documents are available to attach.

After the advance through the Haugneau forest and north to the vicinity of BARENTAL, FRANCE, by the 14th Armored Division, Hq CC'R² marched to the vicinity of NIEDER-
HAGEN (113) and set up headquarters, 14 Dec 44. On the 15th Dec 44, the Headquarters moved on north to Obers-ebach (184) with the mission of supporting either CCA, "A" or C "B".

At this time there were attached the 68 AIB, 94 Cav Sqd (-) and B-84 Medical Bn. The headquarters remained in this location without incident and made plans and reconnaissance for relief or reinforcement of either combat command. On 19th Dec 44, 68 AIB relieved the 62 AIB, part of CCA, with the 62 AIB being placed under CC'R² control.

On 22 Dec 44, CC'R² arrived in the vicinity of BARENTAL, FRANCE, with the mission of defending part of the Corps sector in the Vosges mountains. Under our command at this time were the following units: 62 AIB, 117 Cav Sqd, 94 Cav Sqd (-), 500 FA, (17 FA in support), 1-340 Combat engr, A-125 Armd Eng, B-645 Inf, B-83 Gun Mortar Bn. The defensive sector then held by CC'R² was a line just south of Ritsch (779), Eguisshardt (8246), Neunhoffen (9146). CC'R was officially designated Task Force Wilson by Hq VI Corps.

For the ensuing 9 day period Task Force Wilson organized its defensive sector. Defensive wire was placed in front of all positions with the strength of the defense dependent largely on strong points due to the character of the terrain and small number of troops assigned to this wide sector. The 62 AIB was placed on the right of the sector with the 117 and 94 Cavalry on the left. The 1st Inf Bn was given the mission of maintaining all roads and bridges in the sector out of action as the task force reserve. 500 FA in supported the task force sector with the 17 FA in under its control. Other supporting troops were attached to the front line units in the defensive organization. By 20th Dec 44, organization of the T.F. was completed and work was begun on the main line of resistance which was completed by the 21st Dec 44.

On the 31st Dec 44, it became apparent that the enemy would attack somewhere on the Corps front. Many patrols were very active throughout the evening of the 30th and at midnight a sudden attack was launched by the enemy throughout the Task Force sector. Communication remained good and reports were received that our troops were holding with the exceptions of forward outposts. At approximately 0300 31 Jan. 45, the 117 Cav reported the enemy had overrun two forward platoons and had infiltrated to the rear. Permission was given to fall back to the main line of resistance which was accomplished without undue loss. At about 7 AM same day a report came from the 62 AIB of extreme pressure by the enemy, with some forward elements cut off. Orders were given to fall back to the MLR which was also secured and without difficulty.

All units having fallen back to the MLR and unit reserves having been committed the Task force commander then committed 1st Inf Bn Eng in an attempt to stop enemy infiltrations toward Barental. This action met with only limited success inasmuch as enemy penetrations were in too great a depth and the enemy

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controlled the road between Bennstein and Baerenthal. A-Co 125 Engr were ordered to hold along the road running south from Bennstein. This was also accomplished with little success, the enemy strength being overwhelming along the road and southwest toward Baerenthal.

From this time on information to the CP was negligible and cannot be taken as strictly authentic due to the confusion of the situation. It may be said that little if any contact was maintained between units. The enemy had overrun most positions in the left center of the sector.

Reinforcements were requested by the Task Force commander and a message was received that the 19 AIB and A-Co of the 25 Tk Bn were enroute to Baerenthal. The 19 AIB arrived in Baerenthal at approximately 0800A and the Bn less 1 Co was ordered to counterattack in the 117 Cav zone in order to restore the main line of resistance which by that time had been overrun in some parts. The other company of the 19 AIB was to attack in the vicinity of Bennstein in order to relieve pressure on C Co of the 62nd, which was partially surrounded.

The above mentioned attacks were launched by 1100A with only limited success. The enemy attack had by this time grown to sizable proportions and PW information indicated three enemy Divisions in the assault.

Although our attacks were launched the enemy had cut the Phillipsbourg-Baerenthal and Mouterhouse-Baerenthal roads, thus cutting the Task Force Hq from all communications, with the exception of radio, with lower units.

At approximately 1200A hours the Task Force CP came under observed artillery fire and small arms. All members of the task force headquarters were ordered by the commanding officer to form a perimeter defense and defend the CP.

All communication wires having been cut by artillery and liaison being impossible, it was attempted to communicate by radio with our units. Radio failed with all units except the 62 AIB who informed the commander that A and B Co's were still holding out against mounting resistance but that C Co had been completely overrun. It then became evident that the counterattack in that sector had failed.

At approximately 1400A Tanks of A Co 25 Tk Bn began arriving in Baerenthal, their advance to there having been greatly impeded by the icy mountain roads. The enemy in Baerenthal were quickly destroyed and the tanks were ordered to advance on to Phillipsbourg and to relieve the pressure on the 62 AIB. No tanks were sent to Mouterhouse to aid the situation with the Cavalry units there inasmuch as the enemy held a strong road block between the towns. At this time the Headquarters had no knowledge of the situation with the Cavalry, and it being impossible to contact these units it was thought best by the Commander to relieve pressure against units on the right only, and thereby gain control over at least part of the sector. This was accomplished with good results in the 62 AIB sector and they were thereby able to hold their lines with the aid of 1 Tk Plt, the other two platoons returning to Baerenthal.

Enemy shelling of the Task Force CP continued throughout the afternoon, and at approximately 1700 hours the 275 Infantry relieved Task Force Hudelson by order of VI Corps headquarters. Task Force Hudelson was ordered to move to the vicinity of Reipertswiller and hold the line in that general area. All units in contact were ordered to fall back upon relief and assemble in the vicinity of Zinswiller. (Cavalry units could not be communicated with and therefore could not be informed).

Upon reaching Reipertswiller the commanding officer immediately dispatched the remaining elements of A-Co, 19 AIB and A Co 125 Eng 1-mile north along the Baerenthal-Reipertswiller road in order to stop the enemy attack. This was accomplished with excellent results, and although these units were attacked by what later proved to be one enemy battalion, they held the enemy from Reipertswiller on the evening of Jan. 1.

At approximately 2100A the CO 117 Cavalry (also under his command 94 Cav Sq, 19 AIB(-)) reported to the Task Force CP informing that his command had fallen back, -having been overrun by the enemy-to a line running generally Sarrenburg, Wingen, Wirmenau. The 62 AIB could not be relieved until the following day due to heavy engagement with the enemy.

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Effective 0001 Jan. 2, 1945, Task Force Hudelson was dissolved by Corps order and CC "R" was ordered back to 14th Armored Division control.

After consulting various staff and line officers of the units under Task Force Hudelson it was revealed that the enemy attack was extremely costly to the German divisions. In no operation by the units involved had there been witnessed such a wholesale slaughter of the enemy. In some cases he came in waves through our wire only to be cut down by machine gun cross fire. It was such waves of enemy, with no regard to the tactics of fire and movement, that cost him an estimated 2000 men to advance from Bernstein to Reipertswiller. The troops of Task Force Hudelson made a superb stand in the face of overwhelming numbers of enemy.

Some of our equipment was lost to the enemy, but personnel losses have proved to be very light in comparison to the damage inflicted on the enemy. The commander and Staff of Task Force Hudelson feel that the gallant stand made by the units under our command was the primary reason for the enemy's only limited advance south through the Vosges mountains.

LELAND J CHIPPES
Major, Inf.
Historian

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HEADQUARTERS CC"R"
14TH ARMORED DIVISION, A. P. O. 446
U S ARMY

17 March 1945

A/A
CC"R" HISTORY

Feb -

Very little of military consequence occurred during February 1945. Units attached to Headquarters CC"R" included the 47th Tank Battalion and the 19th Armored Infantry Battalion; and, during the latter part of the month, the 94th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized and the 125th Armored Engineer Battalion — the 94th Cav Sq and the 125th Eng being attached for training and administration only.

Attached units under CC"R" submitted and carried out training schedules during the entire month. Night problems were drawn up and run off; firing ranges were laid out and units conducted firing tests and familiarization courses. New reinforcements of the attached units were oriented and given special training within their assigned units.

Several firing demonstrations were conducted by attached units, particularly a flame-throwing tank exhibition being conducted by the 47th Tank Battalion.

Leland J. Whipple
LELAND J. WHIPPLE
Major, Infantry,
S-2 (Historian)

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HEADQUARTERS CC"R"
14TH ARMORED DIVISION, A. P. O. 446
U S ARMY

17 April 1945

HISTORY

Headquarters CC"R" remained at WOLSCHHEIM, FRANCE, from 1 March 1945 until 11 March 1945. Very little of military consequence occurred during this period. Units attached to the Headquarters included the 47th Tank Battalion and the 62d Armored Infantry Battalion. Units submitted and carried out training schedules during the period.

On the 12th of March 1945, Headquarters CC"R" moved to VILWISHEIM, FRANCE, and remained there until the 19th March 1945. The 47th Tank Battalion was relieved from CC"R" control and B-48 Tank Battalion was attached. Plans and preparation for future operations were formulated and discussed.

CC"R" moved to the vicinity of NIEDERBETSCHDORF, FRANCE, remained there overnight, and then moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of ASHBACH, FRANCE. On 21 March 1945, CC"R" was placed under operational control of CC"A". The mission assigned to CC"R": breeching of the Siegfried Line in the vicinity of KAPSWAYER-STEINFELD-SCHAIDT, GERMANY; operational troops: 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion, 68th Armored Infantry Battalion, A-48 and 25th Tank Battalions, C-125 Armored Engineer Battalion.

At daylight on 21 March 1945 the 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion, after a heavy artillery concentration, attacked STEINFELD, GERMANY, from the west and had all companies in the town by 210635. The remainder of the day and the following day were spent in clearing out pillboxes and mopping up scattered enemy resistance throughout the town. At dawn in STEINFELD a breach was made in the dragons teeth and A-48 Tank Battalion moved through and into position to give support to the attacking infantry.

At 230500 the 68th Armored Infantry Battalion attacked the town of SCHAIKT, GERMANY, after a heavy artillery preparation had been laid on the town. At 231115 the town was reported clear of enemy troops. The 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion and C-125 Armored Engineer Battalion continued to reduce pillboxes and seal up bunkers. At 231600, CC"R" reverted to Division Reserve. All units remained in the immediate vicinity overnight. CC"R" was assigned a police and guard area on the following day in the vicinity of ND OTTERBACH, GERMANY. An exchange of tank battalions took place on the 25th of March, the 25th Tank Battalion being replaced by the 48th Tank Battalion.

The 7th Army Rifle Company # 4, Provisional, was attached to CC"R" on the 27th March 1945.

The remainder of the month was spent in police and guarding of area and preparation and planning for future operations.

Leland J. Whipple
LELAND J WHIPPLE
Major, Infantry
S-2 (Historian)

*M. L. Whipple, Col. Inf. A. Co.
19 Feb 46*

*17 APR 1945
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CC"R" HISTORY -- APRIL 1945

In order that the history of CC"R", might be told for the month of April 1945, it is necessary to go back to the western border of Germany to the shell-rocked town of Nd. Otterbach, which lies some six or seven kilometers due north of the MUNTER RIVER and only two kilometers north of the shattered Siegfried Line towns of STEINFELD and SCHAITDT. From there one may follow the winding, twisting trail of the armored combat command from the hills into the valleys and then back into the hills again; on dirt roads, on asphalt roads, on super Reichsautobahnen, and sometimes no roads at all but across green pastures and through green forests; across four major rivers of Germany -- the Rhine, the Main, the Danube, and the Isar --; through peaceful peasant towns by-passed by the war and through shattered and burned towns where savage battles transpired; by burned-out tanks and overturned half-tracks and wrecked planes; until finally one comes to the outer foot-hills of the Bavarian Redoubt where the Third Reich's last stand was planned and which was to be the mountain hide-out of Germany's leading war criminals. The 31-day campaign, which carried from the western border to the central portion, thence southeastward almost to the border of Austria, was one highlighted by resistance ranging to negligible to light to moderate to heavy and sometimes almost to fanatical, by the capture of thousands of enemy PWs (among them several generals and other high ranking officers), and by the liberation of thousands of Allied war prisoners being held in various concentration camps.

The campaign began at 0200 31 March when CC"R" and attached and supporting units, which included the 25th Tank Battalion, the 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion, and the 501st Armored Artillery Battalion, Company "A", 125th Armored Engineer Battalion, Company "B", 136th Ordnance Battalion, and Company "C", 84th Armored Medical Battalion, began a road march from Nd. Otterbach through BERGZABERN,

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LANDAU, FRATTENHAL, WORMS, DARMSTADT, and to the vicinity of GROSS-BIEBERAU, in the state of Hessen. Operations were to be made under direction of XV Corps, 7th Army, under command of Major General (now Lieutenant General) W. D. Haislip.

At 20100 April 1945 a meeting of all commanders of CC"R" units was had at the CP in GROSS-BIEBERAU, where details of the forthcoming operation were given. The operation was one aimed through the Spessart forest to Bad-NEUSTADT, which is north of SCHWEINFURT. CC"R" was to be in reserve initially until the Main River at LICH was crossed, then the three combat commands were to branch out on three separate routes and expedite movement towards Bad-NEUSTADT.

The combat command did not cross the Main River until the 4th of April and the operation against the enemy guarding the route to Bad-NEUSTADT did not begin until 01300 April when leading elements of the 62nd AIB crossed the LD. By nightfall four towns had been captured; approximately seven kilometers of road had been cleared. At 70000 April the operation was continued with the 62nd AIB leading the attack, supported by one company of the 25th Tank Battalion. Several towns fell in quick order to the renewed drive, and in twelve hours seven inhabited places had been cleared before the enemy once more stopped the combat command just northwest of WILFERSHAUSEN. At 1300 that night a message from C-3, 14th Armored Division, halted the operation; the next morning relief of the 62nd AIB was begun. The combat command moved from the vicinity of WILFERSHAUSEN on 9 April 1945 through Bad-LICHENSTADT to the vicinity of KILLRICHSTADT, where preparations of the newly planned operation, with an objective of LICHENSTADT, were perfected.

The operation against LICHENSTADT began at 120630 April when elements of the 62nd AIB and elements of the 25th Tk Bn crossed the LD on their respective routes of advance. With admirable reconnaissance work being done by the 94th Reconnaissance Squadron and with negligible resistance being encountered, the

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Main River, which was just north of LICHTENFELS, was reached by leading units of the 94th Cav. Sqd., the 62nd AIB, and the 25th Tk Bn at approximately 1030; and by 1600 that night dismounted patrols had crossed the river and had entered the city. A partially destroyed bridge across the Main River was repaired by men of Company "A", 125th Engineer Battalion that night, and on the morning of April 12th, tanks and infantry were streaming across the river onto the southern bank. The town was firmly in CC"R" control by 0900 and the complete objective had been taken by 1145.

Wishing to exploit a breakthrough as much as possible, orders were given to continue the advance to the southward without pause. Again negligible resistance was encountered and CC"R" units swept unchecked to their new objective about 30 kilometers northwest of BAYREUTH in Bavaria state. So swift and unexpected had been the advance that a German officer, searching for his Division Trains, was chagrined to mistake American units for his parent unit, and further chagrined to be captured by men of "B" Company, 62nd AIB. (He never did find his Trains). CC"R" CP was established in MONSEE and operations paused temporarily for two days, then continued again — this time to BAYREUTH and the vicinity of FROCKAU.

The campaign against BAYREUTH began on the morning of 15 April 1945, and ended by noon of that day when 25 kilometers had been cleared and the objective had been reached. The 94th Cav. Sqd., leading the CC"R" advance, reached its objective, consolidated, and found itself faced by a full-scale counterattack. Reinforced by CC"R" Rifle Company, the squadron beat back all attacks successfully and destroyed 19 enemy tanks to a loss of 2 for itself.

Cautious reconnaissance was begun and maintained to the east by CC"R" units until 18th April, when CC"R" reverted to division reserve and was ordered to guard

the rear areas and supply channels along the axis of advance. An advance of over 50 kilometers passed without mishap and CC"R" grouped in an assembly area in the vicinity of STOCKERSBERG on 19 April 1945.

A new operation, planned to advance to the Danube River, seize EICHLSTADT and crossings of the river, and continue the advance southeastwards, was begun at 1300 on the 20th April 1945. With the 25th Tank Battalion leading the advance, CC"R" moved through ALTDORF, FUCHT, across the autobahn south of NURNBERG, and finally to ALLERSBERG, where one of the most intense and savage of all battles participated in by CC"R" transpired. On the morning of the 21st of April the 25th Tk Bn began operations against ALLERSBERG, which was reportedly held by mobile artillery and SS Troops. By 0900 operations had reached a standstill, and by 1000 accurate enemy artillery was falling in the town of ALTENFELDEN, location of CC"R" CP. Small groups of SS troopers infiltrated and caused confusion and a few casualties behind the 25th Tk Bn lines; a direct assault upon the CC"R" CP was repelled by "B" Company, 62nd AIB infantrymen although the autobahn directly behind the CP was cut. In the meantime, the 62nd AIB had launched an attack against HILPOLTSTEIN and had reduced the town with little difficulty. Orders were given for the 62nd AIB to halt operations until ALLERSBERG was captured. A direct attack, launched at 1600 by "A" Company, 62nd AIB, CC"R" Rifle Company, and the 25th Tk Bn failed to win the town, and orders were given to consolidate and prepare to renew the attack on the morning of the 22nd. After a heavy artillery preparation on ALLERSBERG another attack was launched by the same attacking units but once more the attackers were beaten off, and a miniature HATTEN threatened to develop unless new tactics were introduced. To do so the CC"R" CP was moved to HILPOLTSTEIN, the 47th Tank Battalion attached to CC"R", relieving the 25th Tank Battalion, and orders were given to continue the advance to the south-

east towards INGOLSTADT with all possible speed.

At 231700, CG"R" units were told that they had passed under control of the 3rd US Army and 3rd Corps, under the command of Major General Van Fleet, with an identical mission.

The attack against enemy positions at ALT was begun at 0730 on the 24th of April, and despite harassing artillery fire and several mine fields, good gains were made. Leading elements of the 94th Cav Sqd reached the Altmuhl River at 1500 that afternoon, and reported that the bridge was out and that they were receiving heavy artillery, small arms and mortar fire. CG"R" units moved up to the vicinity of HIRSCHFELD and prepared to cross the Altmuhl River immediately upon completion of a bridge. It was decided to send elements of the 86th Infantry Division (with which CG"R" was attacking in conjunction with) across the river first, seize a bridgehead, expand it, and then send the armor across to dash to the Danube River and seize bridge crossings. But it was not until early morning of the 26th that "A" Company, 125th Engineers were able to construct a bridge and CG"R" elements were able to drive for the Danube in force. Then, with the 47th Tk Bn leading the way, CG"R" units cleared the remaining territory before the Danube river and reached the river itself at 201705 April 1945. All bridges were found to have been blown. That night CG"R" reverted to Division Reserve, lost the 47th Tank Battalion, and regained the 25th Tank Battalion.

Little more of military importance occurred during the month. CG"R" units were in reserve during the remainder of the month, with the mission of guarding the outer boundaries of the Division area and preparing to reinforce other fighting combat command. The last bit of action occurred on the 30th of April with the attack on LANDSHUT, conducted by the 68th AIB, "B" Company, 62nd AIB, and CG"R".

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Rifle Company, which was successfully completed by noon of the same day.

The end of the month found CO "R" on the banks of the Isar River with the 18th AIB, the 25th Tk. Bn., and the 501st AFA Bn under operational control, with the combat command more than 350 kilometers east of the starting point of April 1st, and still driving the enemy hordes towards Bavaria, the Tyrol, and eventual defeat.

Leeland J. Hippie
LEELAND J. HIPPIE
Major, Infantry,
Historian.